



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Encourages Support For Mutual Aid Efforts, Food Pantries During Coronavirus Pandemic

MICHAEL GIANARIS May 4, 2020

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QUEENS – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris has focused his efforts during the coronavirus pandemic partnering with local mutual aid organizations and food pantries to deliver food and supplies to seniors and other local residents in need during this crisis. Organizations Senator Gianaris has supported thus far include the Hungry Monk pantry in Ridgewood, Urban Upbound in Long Island City, the Astoria Mutual Aid Society, and LIC Relief. He also worked in cooperation with the Queens Borough President’s office to provide

face masks to these organizations. Senator Gianaris has also made online resources available to connect local residents with assistance.

“I am proud that so many in western Queens have stepped up and are helping their neighbors in need,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “We should all raise awareness of the good work these groups are doing and share a helping hand as we ensure everyone has basic necessities. That willingness to sacrifice and help others is the essence of what it means to be a New Yorker.”

Senator Gianaris is encouraging residents in need of assistance to contact organizations like those mentioned above who are providing help. Information on relief efforts is found below and on Senator Gianaris’ website, [gianaris.nysenate.gov](http://gianaris.nysenate.gov), where he has created a dedicated page for coronavirus-related resources.

Senator Gianaris helped deliver boxes of supplies to the **Bread of Life food pantry** serving the Queensbridge community and run by the Center of Hope International Church under the leadership of Bishop Mitchell Taylor. The pantry is located at 38-49 12th Street, between 38<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Avenues in Long Island City.

“Since the covid-19 pandemic began, already acutely struggling neighbors have borne a greater burden. I am thankful the Bread of Life pantry has been able to sustain friends and neighbors like never before and I appreciate the partnership of Senator Gianaris who has been here to help on the ground and fought for our needs on a broad stage,” said **Bishop Mitchell G. Taylor, senior pastor of the Center of Hope International and CEO of Urban Upbound**.

**LIC Relief** is coordinating interagency efforts in the Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Astoria communities. LIC Relief has partnered with local restaurants to provide free meals to seniors and homebound individuals. Senator Gianaris visited their food pantry and distributed face masks to volunteers.

“LIC Relief was formed on March 13th, the first COVID relief group in Queens, to proactively tackle the inevitable food insecurity issue. We were the first in NYC to create an ecosystem community based model that pays restaurants per meal they make to feed those in need along with our pantry. Now in week eight of our operation, we have been feeding 5k people a week and have put over \$15k a week into 11 local restaurants to help keep them open and staff retained,” said **Kelly Craig, co-founder of LIC Relief**. “We thank Senator Gianaris for being the first elected official to vocalize his support of LIC Relief from the beginning and for making the time to visit our site.”

**Hungry Monk**, started in 2017, recently expanded its efforts to meet the needs of the current crisis. Working out of Covenant Lutheran Church and serving Ridgewood, Glendale, Maspeth, Middle Village and Bushwick, their volunteers are working to ensure local pantries are fully stocked and those in need receive food deliveries. An average of 300 meals are being served daily, and close to 250,000 pounds of food has been shared. Senator Gianaris organized food donations and distributed food to local residents and also donated face masks to the organization.

“The Hungry Monk is grateful for the Senator's support of the Woodbine. The collaboration between the Hungry Monk, the Woodbine, and the Senator's office is an example of how our community can come together to help serve those most in need,” said **Danielle Keren, Director of Operations at the Hungry Monk**.

**Astoria Mutual Aid** has been working since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic to deliver essential supplies to Astoria residents. Senator Gianaris distributed face masks to volunteers at the organization.

“We’re so grateful for these masks - this donation will ensure that our volunteers are protected as they work to keep our neighbors safe across western Queens,” said **Maryam Shariat**

, of Astoria Mutual Aid.

Photos of his visits are available here: [Queensbridge, Ridgewood, Long Island City, Astoria.](#)